The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 124 OCTOBER, 1917. PRICE ONE PENNY
1s. 6d. per annum post free

Contents.

	PAGE
Notes of the Month	1
A Thought for the Month—"Loyalty and Life"	3
Our Church and "Freedom." By Rev. Kenneth Dunbar, M.A. ..	3
The Physical Welfare of Mothers and Children, II. By S. Shannon Millin, B.A., Barrister-at-Law	4
"The Coming Church" ..	5
Lesson Notes for Teachers—Old Testament By Rev. Eustace Thompson.	7
Martin Luther and his "Table Talk"	11
Obituary	12
Reports—Unity Guild; Cairncastle; Rademon	12
Echoes	14
Marriage	14

Notes of the month.

Since the last number of this Magazine appeared, the Editor (the Rev. A. Turner, of Templepatrick) has proceeded to France for another period of service with the Y.M.C.A. He expects to be away for about four months. Our readers will wish for him good health and the satisfaction which comes from congenial hard work. During his absence all communications for the Magazine should be forwarded as early each month as possible to the Rev. H. J. Rossington, who has consented to act in Mr. Turner's stead.

* *

The death of Dr. John Hunter means the loss of a notable representative of the liberal orthodox Churches. Called to minister for many years in great centres like Glasgow and London, he attracted large numbers of thoughtful hearers and held them by the power of his preaching and his virile personality. His appeal was always on behalf of a free, progressive, undogmatic religion. This made him sympathetic to our own cause and Churches, and enabled him on many occasions to take part in our conferences and similar gatherings. He was also a welcome visitor to some of our pulpits both in England and also in this country, and never failed to draw large attendances. As a result, he exercised a very wide influence amongst liberal-minded Christians, not merely by means of his oral and printed sermons, but also by his efforts on behalf of improved devotional worship. His liberalism perpetuated the labours of men like Thomas Erskine and Frederick Denison Maurice, to both of whom he ever acknowledged grateful indebtedness. Dr. John Hunter will be greatly missed, and not least by the members of our own free Churches in Great Britain and America. May the seed he sowed bear a rich harvest and further the cause of liberal religion.

* *

At the end of the present month there will be widely celebrated the beginning of one of the greatest movements in the history of the Protestant faith. On October 31st, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, thus bringing to an issue his strong dissent from the sale of indulgences. The above date has since been recognised as the opening of the Protestant Reformation. Consequently, the Quatercentenary of the latter will call renewed

attention to the Reformation and its principles, and may conceivably induce thoughtful people to ask if such principles are even now generally recognised and applied, as Luther at least was of the opinion they deserved to be. An article in our present issue raises the pertinent question as to the meaning and value of the right of private judgment in matters of belief. It will be provocative of thought respecting what is generally regarded as a leading Reformation principle. It is probable that many Protestants may be induced to familiarise themselves with the chief facts in the career of the monk who shook the world. For such there are admirable facilities. In recent years Luther has found many careful and sympathetic biographers. And apart from actual lives of Luther, there is always accessible for those who would know the character and religious opinions of the man his fascinating "Table Talk." It is still perhaps the best revelation of his outlook upon religion, and his shrewd commenting upon men and things is still wonderfully fresh and suggestive. Doubtless the war will cause the celebrations to be less demonstrative than under normal conditions, yet we are certain it will not and should not lessen our admiration for what Martin Luther was and did four hundred years ago. We, members of the Non-Subscribing Church, are the true heirs of the Protestant Reformation, and as such recall with gratitude our great father in the faith.

* *

We have noted with great gratification from time to time that war distinctions have been won by members of our respective congregations. May we take this opportunity of congratulating most heartily all such recipients and their relatives! From the very first we have had every confidence that our young men would do their duty to the uttermost, and we welcome such awards as the tangible confirmation of our trust. But, on the other hand, there are others who have paid the last penalty in their power by yielding up their lives. To their relatives and friends we tender our deepest sympathy.

* *

It is a sign of the curious and trying times through which we are passing that both our theological colleges in England—Manchester College, Oxford, and the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester—have abandoned, for the present, owing to the war and the consequent absence of students, their normal academic work, and begin during the present month special courses of lectures for ministers or for members of the teaching profession. These special courses, it is hoped, may attract a goodly number of interested hearers, and thereby achieve their end. It was the opinion of Dr. Martineau that every minister, after a period of ministerial service, should have a kind of sabbatical year in which to take up further study. In his own case this was actually done, and the year of continental study undertaken while the new Hope Church, Liverpool, was being built, proved most fruitful to him as teacher and preacher. With so good an example before them, we trust it will be possible for many of our ministers to profit by the new collegiate regulations. In the meantime, Dr. Mellone has elected to discharge important war work of a statistical character at the Admiralty in London. Many friends in the North of Ireland will hope for him much happiness in his new sphere of labour.

* *

"The word Christian has for me a *religious* meaning, apart from Creed. Whoever finds his highest in the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ and lives in his felt relation of Sonship to God, I should call a Christian; he has the very essence of discipleship, even though he should be brought to this temper of soul indirectly without knowing its source; just as the Christian Fathers sometimes say that certain of the pious heathens were 'Christians before Christ.' The 'Living Test,' therefore, of love, of trust, of holiness, *is* in this view that Christian test; and whenever its conditions are complied with, there is a 'Christian' indeed, whether he knows it or not."—Dr. Martineau.

A Thought for the Month

"LOYALTY AND LIFE."

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."—Revelation ii. 10.

"Loyalty means giving the Self to the Cause. And the art of giving is learned by giving. Strain, endurance, sacrifice, toil—the dear pangs of labour at the moments when perhaps defeat and grief most seem ready to crush our powers, and when only the very vehemence of labour itself saves us from utter despair—these are the things that most teach us what loyalty really is. I need not enlarge here upon an ancient and constantly repeated lesson of life—a lesson which is known to all of you. The partisans of war often glorify war as a moralizer of humanity, because, as they say, only the greatest strains and dangers can teach men true loyalty. I do not think that war is needed for such lessons. The loyalty of the most peaceful enables us all to experience, sooner or later, what it means to give, whatever it was in our power to give, for the cause, and then to see our cause take its place, to human vision, amongst the lost causes. When such experiences come, let us face them without hesitation. For all these things together—our personal friends who inspire us to the service of our own causes, the hosts of the loyal whom we know so little, but who constitute the invisible Church of those who live in the spirit, the griefs that teach us the glory of what our human vision has lost from its field, the imagination that throws over all the range of human life its idealizing light, the labours that leave us breathless, the crushing defeats that test our devotion—well, these, these are all only the means and the ministers whereby we are taught to enter the realm of spiritual truth."—"The Philosophy of Loyalty," by the late Prof. Josiah Royce, pp. 296–298.

OUR CHURCH AND "FREEDOM."

By the Rev. Kenneth Dunbar, M.A.

As Unitarians, we take a perennial interest in feeling the pulse of our denominational life. Perhaps this is not unnatural, in view of the smallness of our numbers. Various remedies are constantly being suggested to stimulate that life. May I suggest that these remedies are for the most part superficial, and that the chief cause of our weakness as an active religious community lies in something far deeper than these remedies pre-suppose. That cause is, I believe, to be found in the false interpretation many of us put upon the principle of the right of private judgment and the well-known watchword of "freedom." Freedom, it has been said, is the very breath of our life. "But," we naturally ask, "freedom to do what?" Freedom by itself is a negative thing. It may mean that we are "free" to believe or disbelieve absolutely whatever we choose about the truths of religion. This is what is often understood by outside critics and inside friends. Then, indeed, if we are free in this sense, we are of all men the most miserable. What is generally understood by "the right of private judgment" when applied in all the departments of human life, and not exclusively to the matter of religious truth? I suppose what is generally admitted by that principle is the individual's right to think as he chooses without interference or persecution. So far so good. But many Unitarians go much further than this. They deduce the dangerous and unsound corollary that therefore each man's judgment is of the same importance as the judgment of any other man. This is religious anarchy. And, mark that this interpretation is not admitted in the scientific world. A man can believe if he chooses that the earth is flat—there is a Flat Earth Society in London—but he may expect to be accounted a fool for his pains. How can a *Church* exist which would say

to its members, "I have no Truth to give you. I cannot say whether you are right or wrong. Believe or disbelieve whatsoever you like." For the spirit of Church-life is *fellowship*—fellowship with those who share the same hopes and trusts, fellowship with those mighty spirits who in times past have risen to the vision of God and the glories of His Kingdom. The Christian Church recognizes the collective wisdom of the ages. And each Church stands for some of that inherited wisdom, our Church included, even when we express the purpose of its being in the comprehensive phrase: "for the worship of God and the service of man." We *must* have some bond of union when we meet together in the membership of the Church. We are not "free" in the sense that we are an authority unto ourselves. We must believe in the truths of our religion; their authority constrains us. The laity, as members of our Church, are not "free" to hold to a supercilious agnosticism. The ministers are not "free" to indulge their peculiar idiocyncrasies concerning the latest fulminations of George Bernard Shaw or the still more indefinite visions of Theosophy. It is as impossible to build a strong and enduring Church out of religious anarchists as to construct the universe out of Democritus' mad dance of atoms. For two hundred years we have had it preached into us that our judgment is of as great importance as that of any one else, past or present—if we are to survive another two centuries we shall have to have it preached out. We shall have to share in another fellowship than that of "the pursuit of Truth" (a high-sounding phrase which reveals only a thankless heart): we shall have to share in the fellowship of the prophet, the saint, the martyr, we shall have to acknowledge the authority of the religious experience of the past.

"It was finely said of Luther that he found a united Church and a dead Church, and he left a divided Church and a living Church."

THE PHYSICAL WELFARE OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN.

By S. Shannon Millin, B.A., Barrister-at-Law.

II.

The chapter dealing with the causes of death among infants in Ireland is so interesting that I shall confine myself in the present article to giving an abstract in Dr. Bigger's own words, and reserve any comments thereon to a later article.

"The common infective diseases of childhood — measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria, influenza, and chicken-pox were responsible for the deaths of 6.52 infants per thousand born in 1915, or 7.1 of the total infant deaths. When we consider the distribution of this mortality geographically we find that in four counties or county boroughs the mortality is nil. In eighteen it is under 5 per thousand births, and in fourteen it is between 5 and 10. In only three does it rise above 10 per thousand births, viz.—in Belfast County Borough, in Londonderry County Borough, and in Londonderry County.

"An analysis of the separate causes of death shows that whooping cough is by far the most fatal, carrying off 3.73 per thousand. In other words, whooping cough is the cause of death of more infants than all the other infective diseases put together. In the two county boroughs and the county in which the infective disease mortality is over 10 per thousand births we find that the whooping cough mortality is for Belfast County Borough 6.23 per thousand births, for Londonderry County 10.18, and for Londonderry County Borough 32.29 per thousand births. So the very abnormal death rate from infectious diseases in Londonderry County Borough was due almost entirely to whooping cough. The high mortality rate of this disease is probably in 90 per cent. of the cases due to the dangerous complications—bronchitis and pneumonia—which are, if proper care is taken, very largely

preventable. Unfortunately, most mothers look upon whooping cough as a very minor matter, and the treatment which the child receives is practically none. Its infectious nature is not sufficiently realised by the public, but an epidemic such as that in Londonderry in 1915 can leave no doubt on the matter. Prompt medical treatment would save a great many of the lives at present sacrificed to this disease.

"The next most fatal is measles, with a rate of 1.23 per thousand births. With it the second half of the first year is five times as fatal as the first half. What is necessary for the lessening of the mortality from these infective diseases is earlier diagnosis and treatment. The mother must learn that any departure from the normal in her child may be a serious matter, and a doctor should be consulted. Early isolation of the affected child will not only improve his chance of life, but will also lessen the risk of infection both in the family and in the district.

"Diarrhœal diseases and gastritis caused the deaths of 12.39 infants per thousand born in 1915. The chief causes of the prevalence of diarrhœa and gastritis are ignorance, carelessness, dirt, and improper food. It is a well-known fact that babies who are entirely breast-fed very seldom suffer from these complaints. The use of the bottle introduces many new dangers—the lack of cleanliness of the bottle, the nature of the food, and the degree of its contamination. One other factor is at work: it seems a small thing to bother about, but it is, nevertheless, of great importance—it is the dummy teat or "comforter." This abomination, which is so common, and in which mothers have such faith, is a fruitful cause of gastro-intestinal disorders, and is the last relic of unhygienic babylore to be abandoned.

"Tuberculous diseases caused the death of 2.01 infants per thousand born: their incidence increases with the age of the child, going to prove what is now fairly generally accepted—that they are acquired, and not congenital. The mortality rates for these diseases show a most remarkable decline within the last few years.

"Pneumonia is credited with the deaths of 7.45 and bronchitis with the deaths of 9.19 infants per thousand births. These are largely preventable diseases in infants at all events, and proper care to protect the child from cold, while at the same time giving him plenty of fresh air, would almost banish them from the list of fatal diseases. An infant, underfed maybe, who is habitually kept in a stuffy and ill-ventilated room and is then taken out, insufficiently clothed, by the mother when she goes to do her shopping on a cold and wet day, is placed in the most favourable circumstances for the contraction of pneumonia or bronchitis. Such a practice is all too common in the larger towns.

"In Ireland in 1915 there were 8,753 deaths of infants under one year of age. In the same year 4,724 deaths between the ages of one and five occurred, that is almost twice as many children died within one year of birth as within the next four years. The common infective diseases are responsible for nearly one-third of the deaths of children at this age, the percentage being more than four times that of infants from these causes. Measles is by far the most important cause."

"THE COMING CHURCH."

It was significant that even prior to the war there was much criticism written and implied concerning the condition of the Christian Church. It emanated not alone from those without organised religion. Such critics, like the poor, are always with us—or rather against us. But there were also earnest men within the Church who turned from things as they were to picture things as they should and still might be. Thus, one of our eminent divines in America, Dr. Joseph Henry Crooker, pleaded for "The Church of To-day," or predicted the principles of "The Church of To-morrow." In both there is the earnest conviction that as yet

the Christian Church has fallen short of its great ideal; in both also there is a profound faith that the Church may yet be born again to greater power and to wider influence. Such, likewise, is the dominant faith of a book by the late Dr. John Hunter. In view of his recent death, referred to in another part of this Magazine, it is interesting to recall his passionate plea for Christian unity and practical Christian charity. What he said some fourteen years before the war the latter has reinforced and made more urgent. This book, which bears the title of "The Coming Church," claims emphatically that the Church, as it then was, represented an unrealised ideal. Consequently he enters a plea "for a fuller and more perfect realisation of the ideal of the Church of Christ." Its terms of communion should be as comprehensive as the Christian life, looking not for uniformity of order and ritual, submission to external regulation and ceremony, but for mutual spiritual sympathy, aspiration, and purpose. It will, therefore, refuse to expect, and to seek after, like views and opinions. As Dr. Hunter forcibly puts it: "The whole idea of the Church as an opinionative fellowship, an association of people holding the same theological views, is a sadly mistaken one, and has proved itself to be so times and ways without number." Nor will the Church that is to be expect sameness of religious experience. "The ways by which men are brought to God are as many as the methods of the Divine approach to man." Further, aspiration, not attainment; purpose, not character, are to be its basis and bond of union. "The Church of Christ is for all aspiring and struggling souls, and not only for choice and select Christians; it is pre-eminently a Church of disciples, not a Church of finished scholars and saints." It necessarily follows that a Church inclusive of many varieties of religious experience and of moral attainment must find for itself a worship "comprehensive and Catholic—as widely adaptable as is possible to the needs of men, both individually and collectively." But the paramount reason of its existence is to voice the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to proclaim glad tidings for all people. Anything other or less than this is the prostitution of its pre-eminent and all-important purpose. Not content, however, with noting the characteristic features of the coming Church, the author's practical aim is to find for it favour and fervent advocacy. It is in this part of his book that his appeal will awaken ready response. "By putting before you the ideal of a Church simply Christian, I hope to put you in love with it, to deepen your confidence in it, to make you give your influence and sympathy to the movements and men who are most directly and openly preparing the way for it, and to stimulate you to do what you can for its realisation. It is an ideal worth living and working for. Though it tarry, wait for it—praying with Tauler, 'May that which is perfect come, that that which is in part may be done away.' The waiting, however, need not be passive. Ever now we may belong to the Catholic fellowship of Jesus Christ. In our religious sympathies we can disown every sectarian limit; we can refuse to have anything to do with drawing lines, or keeping to lines already drawn, which the Master of Christians never drew; we can treat as anti-Christ the sectarian temper of all those religious guides who bid us hold no communion with any other Church than their own; we can turn away in the Lord's name from everything that has the mark of exclusiveness upon it as if it had the mark of base ambition or passion; we can strive to make our ways of worship and teaching and work as non-exclusive and catholic as He was who said 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother'; and 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'" Space will not permit of our saying more concerning Dr. Hunter's earnest and inspiring little book. But surely sufficient has been said to show its author to be no unworthy champion of the Church of Christ that is to be.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Bible Instruction for 1917 arranged by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.

October 7. *How the world was made.* Read Genesis i. 1—ii. 3. *Key Text,* Gen. i. 31.

General Note.—Genesis is the Greek word for origin or beginning. The first book in the Bible is called the book of Genesis, because it is a book of beginnings. It consists of legends, describing in particular the beginning of the Hebrew people or Israelite nation; but among the legends are some purporting to describe the beginning of the heavens and the earth and all things visible, including the human race, and the beginning of sin and sorrow, the beginning of civilization, the beginning of prayer to God, and the beginning of the diversity of tongues. In each case the author knew nothing or little about the matter he described; but he cared not greatly for the facts themselves, of which he was really ignorant, but certain ideas he connected with the subject were the things he valued and deemed of importance for those for whom he wrote. He was not sufficiently informed to give a truly scientific account of how the world was made, nor was he likely to guess aright the order of creation. But the great idea he entertained himself, and wished to impress upon his readers, was that the world and every thing within it is the work of God, and that the work of God is wonderfully grand and good: fit to inspire mankind with awe and gratitude and with the will to worship God. The story of a day of divine rest, following upon a six-days' work of creation, is a solemn, stately, and impressive expression of the conviction that the Sabbath Day is a divine ordinance, the faithful observance of which is worthy to be a mark of those aspiring to be counted as Israelites indeed or true people of God.

v. 2. "Waste and void" in Hebrew, "tohu" and "bohu"—two words, the very sound of which are wonderfully expressive of emptiness, like that of a "waste, howling wilderness"—only greater and more fearsome.

vv. 6-8. The blue expanse of sky is described, and probably assumed to be, as a vault above the earth: *firm,* to divide the waters of the seas beneath and the waters stored above to form supplies for rain, the sun and moon and stars being fixed in the solid frame (v. 17).

vv. 14-18. It is worthy of note that the Hebrew writer conceived of "light" created upon the first day (v. 3) as separate from the "lights" created upon the fourth.

v. 22. "God blessed them." That statement is a beautiful mode of expressing the belief that God intended those living creatures to be happy, a belief which points to the duty of mankind to regard them and deal with them according to a like benevolence.

vv. 26, 27. The Hebrew word for God is Elohim, a plural word (compare *cherubim* and *seraphim,* plurals of *cherub* and *seraph*). Elohim is a "*plural of majesty,*" denoting one God, though speaking as of more than one. Here, in the speech attributed to the Almighty, although it is very exceptional, the plural pronoun is used in agreement with the plural noun—"God (*Elohim*) said, let us make man in *our* image." In the following sentence, however, *in which the speech is continued,* the singular pronoun is used—"God (still *Elohim*) made man in *his* own image."

v. 27. It is too much to say whether the author conceived a likeness of outward form between man and God. Far more probably he expresses the belief that God made man like himself (though not equal to himself) in intellectual faculties, such as designing, doing, making, ruling, reflecting, judging, etc. Notice the difference of implication between the statement that *God who made man is like man himself,* and the statement that *man, who was made by God, is like God himself.*

v. 28. Compare with v. 22, and see note thereon. It is noteworthy that

this, the first Biblical commandment of God to man, is to multiply. Why multiply? In order to maintain the strength of the race, fitting it to attain to full dominion over the earth, man being manifestly adapted and presumably designed for that end.

Chapter ii., v. 2. The resting from work upon the seventh day here attributed to God is an example for men. It were well for them likewise to make a sabbath of the seventh day to review their work and see that it is good; or, being imperfect in themselves and in their work, to note defects in which they may improve. *Sabbath* is from Hebrew shab-bath, denoting *rest*, hence *day of rest*, in reference to mere cessation from activity rather than to the benefit associated with repose. The choice of the seventh day for the Sabbath was probably suggested by an ancient custom of regulating religious observances with reference to division, into quarters, of the period between new moon and new moon.

October 14. *The Garden of Eden.* Read Genesis ii. 15-24. *Key Text*, Genesis ii. 15.

General Note.—The Bible myth tells us that the Garden (or Paradise, or Park) of Eden was the first dwelling place of man. We seem intended to understand that it was situated somewhere in Messopotamia (land between the rivers), the country between the Tigris and Euphrates, which, after union, flow into the Persian Gulf. The statement, however, being utterly unhistorical, purely mythological, the question of geography is altogether unimportant.

1. The first point of beauty, and at the same time of truth, which the story contains, is that expressed in the statement of divine purpose: God put the man into the Garden of Eden *to dress it and to keep it.* God himself has dressed the earth with plants and trees, good for food and pleasant to the sight; He orders the conditions in which these things shall spring out of the earth and flourish. He has given man, who is the child of God (made in His image), wondrous faculties for doing the same work—sowing seed and planting trees, dressing the earth with them wherever he may be.

2. The next statement, *that God forbade man to partake of the tree of knowledge,* is less true and less beautiful. It belongs to a superstition which occurs in the book of Genesis again, and yet again, namely—that God is jealous of the unlimited ambition of mankind to increase their power by knowledge. It is only a partial truth that knowledge is a deadly thing; it increases human responsibility; it lays us open to the temptation of a sinful choice when we discover the properties and pleasantness residing in things evil. Again, a man who is conscious of increasing human power is tempted to relinquish his reliance upon God. The right principle is summed up in the words:—

> "Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell."

(*For elder scholars.*—Yet new knowledge, showing up in a true light old error, has so often excited irreverance, or at least shaken faith, that zealous upholders of old foundations of piety have ever been wont to offer obstinate, and often cruel, opposition to advancing knowledge.)

3. It is worth while to note with admiration that the reference to the help which was to be made answering to man (*i.e.*, meet, suitable or sufficing, for him) coming *immediately before* the reference to the humbler creatures (vv. 19, 20) is repeated *immediately after* it. This implies impressively that these humbler companions *are*, rightly viewed, true helps for man, though not one of them is all sufficing for him. (Scholars should be led to enlarge upon this fact and to supply their own illustrations of it).

4. *Woman is a help meet for man, because she is equal to him.* The lower animals, except in a subordinate sense, and under the control of man (and even so, with very little intelligence), are not fitted to share in the proper duty of man, viz.—to dress the Garden of Eden and to keep it, or, in other words, to enhance the beauty and the value of the earth in every way divinely

opened to the intellect of man. But woman is altogether constituted to share this work, being endowed with some mental qualities which are complementary to those of man.

5. The story of the *rib* is a quaint touch designed to impress upon the thought the indispensability of woman to man. *Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh* is a Hebrew idiom comparable to the familiar phrase used of one thing regarded as essential to the utility of another—*part and parcel of it.*

6. Humanity is so constituted that women in general are indispensable to men in general, and *vice versa*—they are part and parcel of each other; but man and woman that are fitly wedded are to be considered absolutely one and inseparable—"*they shall be one flesh.*"

October 21. *The Beginning of Sin and Sorrow.* Read Genesis iii. 1-15. *Key Text,* Romans vi. 23.

General Note.—Sin is conduct lacking divine sanction, or conduct divinely prohibited. Whenever the prohibition is known to be express, sin is accompanied by sorrow or unhappiness. It is the prospect of an immediate pleasureable sensation that tempts us to commit a sin, in spite of our knowledge that loss of happiness lasting for a long time, possibly a life-time, will far outweigh any momentary pleasure. The temptation to sin may come without assistance, but it is often strengthened by the persuasions of another person. Yet if we yield to temptation we have no real excuse: the fact remains that we have been unfaithful to the commandment which we ought to have revered. Therein is the justness of the penalty.

1. *The Serpent.* Snakes have been loathed or dreaded nearly always all the world over. This is mainly due to their terrible appearance and the venomous nature of very many of them, but partly to their mysterious-seeming mode of progression on the ground or upon trees, etc. There is that in their form and motion which is suggestive of subtility, guile, wicked cleverness, or evil wisdom. That is why the serpent is made the tempter of the man and the woman.

2. *The Tree of Knowledge.* What the serpent says of the fruit is true as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough. There are other things which produce an effect regarded by some people as pleasant for a while, yet after a while are injurious (*e.g.,* alcohol, opium, excessive bodily exercise, work-time turned into play-time).

3. *Hiding from God.* The hiding of sin from other men is natural, because it is generally they who are instrumental in the matter of the penalty, either punishing the sinner in a direct way, or indirectly punishing him by making him feel shame by the exhibition of their contempt or abhorrence. But it is impossible to hide from God. This is signified in the story. They did not hide because they were naked, but because they dreaded—as sinners always do—the Divine reproach. Dread of the Divine displeasure at the sin of disobedience drove them to the further sin of falsehood—a strange but common consequence of sinning; the sinner finds himself falling, as if helplessly, out of one sin into another.

4. *The Tempters.* The man accuses the woman, and the woman the serpent, of presenting the temptation. The man tries to persuade himself that he is the less to blame for his fall, because his tempter is the very helper whom God himself had given him. But if the serpent sinned in tempting the woman, the woman's sin was her own; and if the woman sinned in tempting the man, the man's sin was his own. Apart from the question of other guilt, the man and woman were each guilty of a separate act of disobedience. No one can plead that he was unaware that the commandment of God is absolutely authoritative; no one can deny that the recommendation of the tempter itself reminds him of the commandment of God.

5. *The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.* The words used are merely descriptive of the fact that nearly universal enmity exists between human beings and snakes. (*For elder scholars.*—The serpent is endowed (in

the story) with speech and knowledge only for the convenience of constituting him an adept at temptation. There is no reason to suppose him intended for a particular tempter in disguise, namely a devil. He is merely a typical tempter. Yet when the diseased belief in a devil had grown up it was natural to identify him with "the old serpent," and to read this story as a description of the beginning of his long, lasting malice towards the children of men (the seed of the woman); so that Saint Paul, writing to Christians at Rome (doubtless in allusion to the words in Genesis iii. 15) could say, looking hopefully to the triumph through Christ of good over evil, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.")

October 28. *Cain and Abel.* Read Genesis iv. 1-16. *Key Text,* I John iv. 20.

General Note.—Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. Each brought to the altar offerings for God from the produce of his toil by which he lived, Cain being a tiller of the ground, Abel a keeper of flocks. A New Testament writer says (Hebrews xi. 4) that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Not that in God's eyes Abel's firstlings were in themselves of greater value than Cain's fruits of the ground, but the excellence of the gift depended upon the excellent righteousness of the giver, in the case of Abel, whilst the unworthiness of Cain's offering was due to the unworthiness, the sinfulness, of the giver. We are not expressly told in what his sinfulness consisted, but we are led by the sequel to assume that it was envy or jealousy of his brother. Jesus says—

"If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee (or surely, too, if *thou* hast aught against *him*), leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew v. 23, 24).

This Cain did not do; and because he was angry with his brother, God did not accept his offering. Then he became more angry, and in anger killed his brother.

vv. 4, 5. The way in which the acceptance and rejection of the respective offerings was signified is not related. In pictures the difference is denoted by the different direction of the smoke of the sacrifice—ascending from Abel's altar, but descending from Cain's. More probably the narrator would have one suppose the absence of a sense of satisfaction on Cain's part owing to his evil thoughts, which would make him feel that his offering had been in vain.

v. 7. Sin is imaginatively described as an evil beast crouching by Cain's door, eager to spring upon him. He is told that he should rule over it, that is to say: secure the mastery over it and subdue it.

v. 8. The subject of Cain's conversation with Abel is not specified; it would not be so likely to be the words God has been speaking to him as some unjust complaint against Abel (see RVm.)

v. 9. This is a typical answer of a wicked person wickedly pretending to know nothing about the crime or sin he has himself committed.

v. 10. The blood-stain upon the ground is like a voice denouncing the guilty man and calling out for justice against him.

v. 11. Cain will be driven from his native land with reproaches and curses and loud threats of vengeance upon him.

v. 12. That *the ground should no longer yield unto him its strength* might well be because he would no longer have the same spirit to till it zealously.

v. 14. Cain would suppose that when he had gone beyond the borders of his native country he would be beyond the protection of its God.

v. 15. Sevenfold vengeance would be the slaying of seven members of the murderer's family. The threat of sevenfold vengeance seems intended to denote that the killing of Cain would be more sinful than the murder of Abel, which it might be held to be, inasmuch as the murder of Abel had resulted from uncontrolled anger, whereas the killing of Cain would be the result of a pre-

meditated resolve; or perhaps the murder of Cain might be considered a worse crime than the murder of Abel, as being the *second* crime of the same species.

v. 15. The *sign* would be some ominous token deterring the intending slayer of Cain by dread of the consequences to himself—such a token as a startling sudden breeze or unexpected rain-drops or the sound of distant thunder.

MARTIN LUTHER AND HIS "TABLE TALK."

"God is patient, long-suffering, and merciful; in that he can keep such silence, and can suffer so long the most wicked wretches to go unpunished. I could not do so."

* *

"The hearers of God's Word are as much bound to maintain their pastors and ministers as they are bound to fulfil the Ten Commandments. For the office of preaching dependeth on the first table of the Ten Commandments, especially on the Fourth Commandment. St. Paul speaketh to the Corinthians concerning the same, and saith, 'He which serveth at the altar shall also live by the altar'; and, 'We must not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.'"

* *

"If a robber on the highway should fall upon me then truly I would be judge and Prince myself, I would with joy use my sword, because no body were with me that were able to defend me; I would thereupon take the holy sacrament, that I had accomplished a good work. But if one fell upon me as a preacher for the Gospel's sake, then with folded hands I would lift up mine eyes to heaven, and say, 'My Lord Christ! here I am, I have confessed and preached thee, and is now my time expired? So I commit my spirit into thy hands', and in that way I would die."

* *

"I remember a fable which fitted very well for these times, and for this purpose, discoursed of before. A lion, making a great feast, invited all the beasts thereunto, and with them also he invited swine. Now, as all manner and sorts of dainties were brought and set before the guests, the swine demanded if brewer's grains might be had for them? Even so in these days it is with our epicures: we preachers bring and set before them in the church its most dainty and costly dishes, as everlasting salvation, remission of sins, and God's grace; but they, like swine, cast up their snouts, and root after dollars, crowns, and ducats: and indeed what should a cow do with nutmegs? She would rather content herself with oat-straw.

"Thus it happened once to a Pastor Ambrosis R., in the case of his flock. When he exhorted them to come and hear diligently God's Word, they said: 'Yes, dear Pastor, if you lowered a cask of beer into the Church and caused us to be summoned to it, we would gladly come.'"

* *

"The Gospel is at Wittenberg as the rain, which falls into water, and there is of little use; but if it falls upon a sandy field when the young corn is dry and withered and burnt by the sun, then such rain quickens the land and makes it fruitful."

* *

"Cursed are all preachers that in the Church aim at high, hard, and neat things, and, neglecting the saving health of the poor, unlearned people, seek their own honour and praise, and therewith to please one or two ambitious persons.

"When I preach in this place, I sink myself deeply down. I regard neither *Doctores* nor *Magistratros*, of which are here in the church above forty; but I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of which are more than two thousand. I preach to these, and direct myself to them that have need thereof. Will not the rest hear me? the door standeth open unto them, they may be gone. I see that the ambition of preachers groweth and increaseth, the same will do the greatest mischief in the Church, and

will produce great disquietness and discord; for they will needs teach high things touching matters of state, thereby aiming at praise and honour; they will please the worldly wise, and in the meantime neglect the simple and common multitude."

Obituary.

2ND-LIEUTENANT R. DICKSON,
Royal Irish Regiment.

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death in action of Lieutenant Robin Dickson, the elder son of Mr. John M. Dickson, 28 Wellington Park, Belfast. The deceased officer returned from Canada shortly after the outbreak of the war, and joined the University and Public Schools Corps, and then, after seeing some service in the ranks, recently received a commission in the Royal Irish Regiment. His younger brother, Captain Charles Dickson, M.D., R.A.M.C., has also been in the Army since the early stages of the war, and this month has received the M.C. for great gallantry and devotion to duty under heavy fire.

Lieutenant Dickson was connected with All Souls' Church, Belfast, and on Sunday, 9th September, the minister paid the following tribute to his memory:—"The death in action of Lieutenant Robin Dickson, whom we saw so short a time ago worshipping in our midst, is a sad blow to us all. His was a most valiant and loveable character. Gallantly and willingly did he offer his life in his country's service, not so much influenced by the fighting spirit of youth (although he was a born fighter) as inspired by a matured and devoted desire to maintain the honour of his country. He knew well the risks he was running. 'Death,' he said, when on the occasion of his last leave an old friend mentioned that dread possibility, 'Death! who fears death?' Truly, none feared it less than he. Nor is the reason far to seek, although to some it may seem a strange one. He confronted death, he was prepared for death, because he was so happy in his living. He made friends wherever he went, infecting those about him with a blessed feeling of happy vitality, enjoying all the varied experiences, hard and soft, it was his lot to meet. And accordingly, finding and making life so good, he had a firm faith in the goodness of all life, both here and hereafter. To his bereaved family I scarcely know how to speak, for rarely have I seen a family linked together in a more devoted (although unobtrusive) affection. But my task is the easier because I know that they have of themselves found great consolation in the conviction which develops out of devoted love, that the link of affection can never be severed, and that somehow and somewhere, in God's good time, all that made them devoted parents and children, and devoted brothers and sisters, will be completed on a grander and more lasting scale than mortal flesh can comprehend."

As a tribute of respect, the Dead March in "Saul" was played.

REPORTS.

Unity Guild.—The last outing of the summer took place on Saturday, Sept. 8th, and its rendezvous was Moira. What was lacking in the matter of attendance was amply made up by the genial welcome and hospitality of Mr. Weatherall and his people. Met at the station with kindly greetings, the party was conducted to the banks of the Lagan Canal, and there, amidst much merriment, directed to embark in the barge placed at the disposal of Guild visitors by Mr. Agnew. It seemed incredible to many of the party that so much rural and quiet beauty could nestle away in that run from Ladybridge to Aghalee. The trip was much enjoyed, as was the "al fresco" tea at Ladybridge that followed. A delightfully meandering walk through the village to the dear little Meeting House, so tenderly cared for, was a fitting conclusion to a visit that had been the object of much generous thought and planning by Miss Weatherall.

On Wednesday evening, October 10th, the opening meeting of the Winter Session will take place in the Central Hall at 8 o'clock. The reception by the President (Rev. J. A. Kelly) will be followed by a Lecture Concert given by Mr. Teasdale Griffiths, A.R.C.O., Organist of All Souls' Church.

* *

Cairncastle. — The Sunday School Treat was held on Friday, August 17th —a beautiful, fine day, which everyone enjoyed. There was a good muster of children for tea in the school-room at three o'clock, and a fair sprinkling of adults too. After tea all adjourned to one of the Windy Hill fields, kindly lent by Miss Hunter, and all kinds of games and races were enjoyed, as well as kite-flying and skipping. About eight o'clock the children returned to the school-room for cakes and lemonade, and then went home, while the "elder" young people stayed and danced—first in the field and then in the school-room—till about two o'clock. Every one pronounced it a most successful day, and on the succeeding Sunday there was a record number of scholars at the Sunday School, several new names being added to the roll.

At the Old Meeting House on August 5th the special service of "Remembrance and Renewal of Purpose," prepared for the third anniversary of the declaration of war by the National Conference, was used, the leaflets being afterwards taken home.

* *

Rademon.—Our minister to-day (Aug. 26th), before proceeding with his sermon, said a few words in appreciation of the patriotism and self-sacrificing disposition of Private Samuel Alexander, the first of the young men of the congregation called upon to lay down his life in the great war. Samuel Alexander was the fourth son of our Sexton, and was in his thirty-fifth year. About five years ago he migrated to Canada, and there the call of his country reached him and found him ready. He joined the Canadian Contingent, came with his battalion to England for training, and in due course proceeded to the Front. For four or five months he had his share in the hard fighting, with which the newspapers have made us familiar. Now he occupies a soldier's grave "somewhere in France." On Wednesday of last week his wife, who lives at Ballydugan, Downpatrick, received the following communication, dated August 19th, from Miss A. M. Raine, sister-in-charge of a casualty clearing station, France :—"You will have heard of your sad loss before this letter reaches you. Your husband was brought here badly wounded in the body on August 17th, and, though all possible was done for him, he passed away during last night. He did not leave any messages ; he did not realise how ill he was. You will be glad to know he did not suffer much pain, and that he was in a comfortable bed, and had all he wished for. He will be buried in the cemetery here, and his grave will be marked by a cross and neatly kept. I may not give you the name of the place, but the War Office will tell you, if you wish for it. His belongings will be sent you by the authorities later. With sympathy in your grief."

Thus the sad news was broken to his anxious wife. Quickly it reached his father and mother and other relatives at Rademon. Three children are left to mourn his loss. In after days it may be comforting to them to remember that their father was a brave man, who died for others' good. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"It is good for us to build temples to great names which recall special transfigurations of humanity; but it is better still, it gives a firmer nerve to purpose and adds a finer holiness to the ethical sense, to carry ever with us the unmarked, yet living, tradition of the voiceless, unconscious effort of unnumbered millions of souls, flitting lightly away like showers of thin leaves, yet ever augmenting the elements of perfectness in man, and exalting the eternal contest."—John Morley, in "Critical Miscellanies."

ECHOES.

"What right have I to grieve, who have not ceased to wonder? We feel at first as if some opportunities of kindness and sympathy were lost, but learn afterwards that any *pure grief* is ample recompense for all. That is, if we are faithful; for a great grief is but sympathy with the soul that disposes events, and is as natural as the resin on Arabian trees. Only Nature has a right to grieve perpetually, for she only is innocent. Soon the ice will melt, and the blackbirds sing along the river which he frequented, as pleasantly as ever. The same everlasting serenity will appear in this face of God, and we will not be sorrowful if he is not.—"Familiar Letters of H. D. Thoreau," the above being part of his reply to condolences received after the death of his dearly-loved brother John

* *

"'The achievement of the Kingdom of God'; this was his calling. Henceforth this was his business in life. . . .

"For a time he indulged in vague dreams of that Kingdom of God on earth of which he would be one of the makers; it was a dream of a shadowy splendour of cities, of great scientific achievements, of a universal beauty, of beautiful people living in the light of God, of a splendid adventure, thrusting out at last among the stars. But neither his natural bent nor his mental training inclined him to mechanical or administrative explicitness. Much more was his dream a vision of men inwardly ennobled and united in spirit. He saw history growing reasonable and life visibly noble as mankind realised the Divine aim. All the outward peace and order, the joy of physical existence finely conceived, the mounting power and widening aim were but the expression and verification of the growth of God within. Then we could bear children for finer ends than the blood and mud of battlefields. Life would tower up like a great flame. By faith we reached forward to that. And the price one paid for that; one gave sham dignities, a Levitical righteousness, immediate peace, one bartered kings for God. . . . He looked at the mean, poverty-struck room, he marked the dinginess and tawdriness of its detail and all the sordid evidences of ungracious bargaining and grudging service in its appointments. For all his life now he would have to live in such rooms. He who had been one of the lucky ones. . . . Well, men were living in dug-outs and dying gaily in muddy trenches; they had given limbs and lives, eyes and the joy of movement, prosperity and pride, for a smaller cause and a feebler assurance than this he had found." . . . H. G. Wells, "The Soul of a Bishop."

* *

"What indeed is true civilisation? By its fruits you shall know it. It is not dominion, wealth, material luxury; nay, not even a great literature and education widespread—good though these things may be. Civilisation is not a veneer, it must penetrate to the very heart and core of the societies of men. Its true signs are thoughts for the poor and suffering, chivalrous regard and respect for woman, the prompt recognition of human brotherhood, irrespective of nation or colour or religion, the narrowing of the domain of mere force as a governing factor in the world, abhorrence of what is mean and cruel and vile, ceaseless devotion to the claims of justice."

—Lord Chief Justice Russell.

MARRIAGE.

Jackson—Buckley—August 29th, at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, by Rev. Dr. Hargrove, M.A., Edward Renard, second son of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Jackson, Leeds, to Ethel Maud, fourth daughter of the late Mr. James Buckley and Mrs. Buckley, Leeds. At home, October 18th and 19th, Myrtle Park, Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

HAD I A GOLDEN POUND.

By Francis Ledwidge,

The Irish Peasant Poet, lately killed in Action.

Had I a golden pound to spend,
My love should mend and sew no more,
And I would buy her a little quern,
Easy to turn on the kitchen floor.

And for her windows curtains white,
With birds in flight and flowers in bloom,
To face with pride the road to town
And mellow down her sunlit room.

And with the silver change we'd prove
The truth of love to life's own end,
With hearts the years could we embolden,
Had I a golden pound to spend.

B.E.F., February 5, 1917.

(From "The Daily Mail.")

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